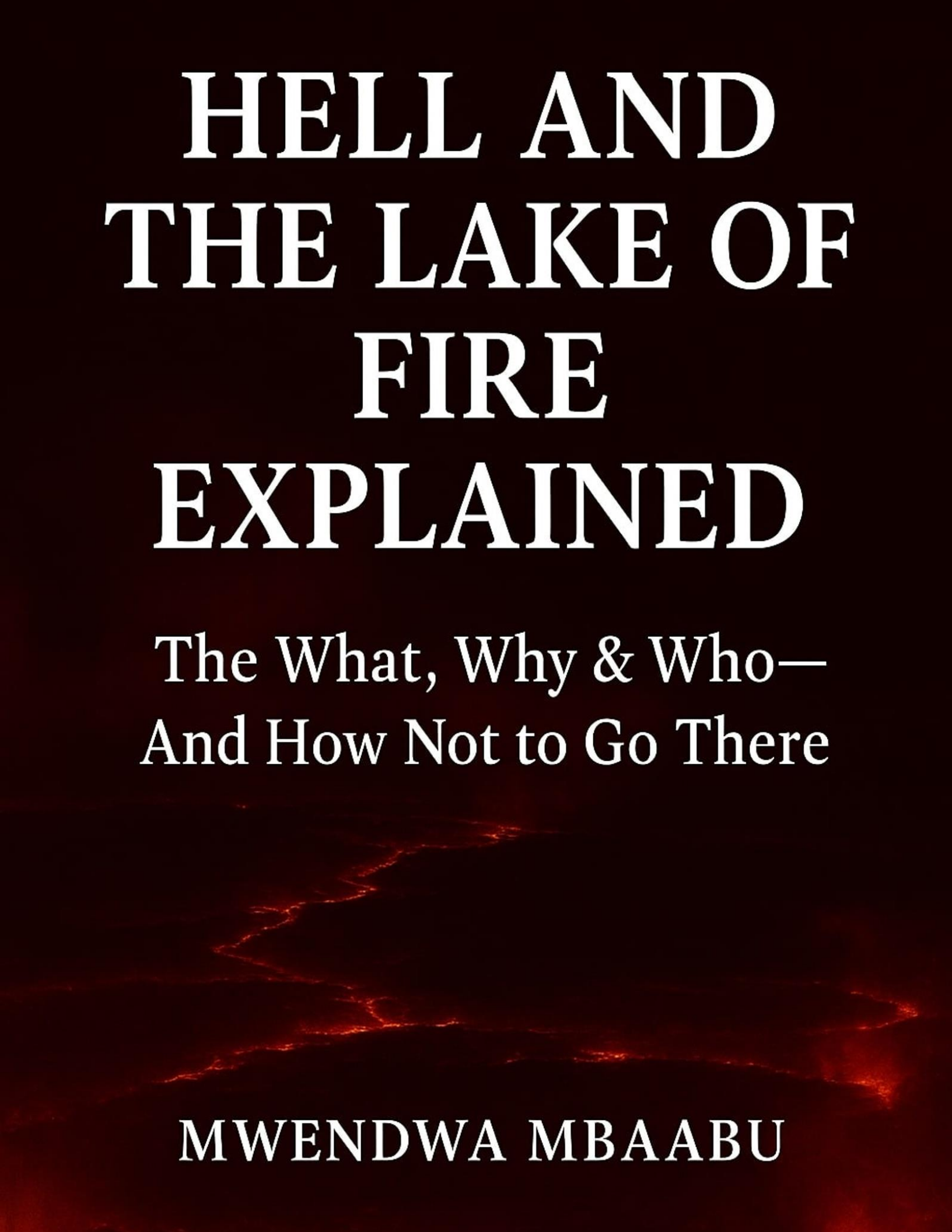
HELL AND THE LAKE OF FIRE EXPLAINED

The What, Why & Who—And How Not to Go There



MWENDWA MBAABU

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Dedication

To God be the Glory!
Feel free to share this booklet as an evangelism tool or as a guide for personal or group study.

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Introduction

The Bible tells us that two places await those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation after they die: **Hell** and **the lake of fire.** These two places are often used interchangeably, but they are distinct locations. The Bible also mentions **Hades**, especially in the Old Testament, as the place where all dead people went, but provides little detail.

This article will attempt to explain the differences between Hades, Hell, and the Lake of Fire using scriptures. We will also look at the biblical descriptions of hell and the lake of fire. I pray that none of us shall end up in there in Jesus' name.

The biggest difference between hell and the lake of fire is their **timing** and their **occupants**.

In summary, hell is the **current** place where those who die having rejected the salvation Jesus offers go to after death. Hell is a place of torment and is also a holding place for these souls until the day of judgment. The lake of fire, however, is the final destination of these souls after the last judgment. This means there is no one currently in the lake of fire; it is a future place.

1. What is Sheol (Hades)?

When the souls of human beings die, they go to one of two places: **heaven or hell**. However, before Jesus came to earth, lived, died, and rose again, **all** human beings who died went to Sheol or Hades. **"Sheol"** is the **Hebrew** term for **Hades,** or the **world of the dead,** also called **the grave or the underworld**. **Hades** is the **Greek** equivalent of the same place. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, while the New Testament was written in Greek.

No one went to heaven before Jesus died and rose again, because no one was worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven since all were still in their sinful natures. We can see from the verses below that both the good and wicked people went to Sheol, or the underworld, after death.

"The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God." Psalms 9:17

"All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said. "I will go down to Sheol mourning for my son." So his father wept for him." Genesis 37:35

"As soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with sorrow to Sheol." Genesis 44:31

"*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.*" *Ecclesiastes 9:10*

"But if the LORD brings about something unprecedented, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them and all that belongs to them so that they go down alive into Sheol, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt." Numbers 16:30

"But you will be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit." Isaiah 14:15

The good and torment side of Sheol (Hades)

Even in the Old Testament times, however, God made a distinction still between the wicked and righteous in Sheol/Hades. The righteous who died in the Old Testament times, obeying God as far as he had revealed himself to them, went to the good part of Sheol, a place of comfort and rest, also called **Abraham's Bosom**, and the unrighteous went to the part of torment in Hades.

We get this in clear detail from the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which Jesus himself told to his disciples. This was a true story, and we can tell by the fact that Jesus used real names and real people like Abraham and Moses.

"Now there was a rich man dressed in purple and fine linen, who lived each day in joyous splendor. And a beggar named Lazarus lay at his gate, covered with sores and longing to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. One

*day the beggar died and was carried by the angels to **Abraham's side (bosom, chest)**. And the rich man also died and was buried. In **Hades**, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham from afar, with Lazarus by his side. So he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. **For I am in agony in this fire**.'" Luke 16:19-24*

Sheol before Jesus died

The Bible does not give us too many details about Sheol before Jesus died. We do not get detailed information about who went where in the entire history of the world, except that the wicked went to the torment side of Sheol, and the righteous went to Abraham's bosom (Abraham is known as the father of all who have faith in God for salvation). Where the Bible is silent, it is good not to guess, but Jesus gave us all the information we need. In 1 Peter 3:19-20, Peter mentions that Jesus preached to souls who died in the flood during the days of Noah, who were in prison in Hades. Why Jesus preached to these particular spirits when he descended to Hades after his death, we are not sure.

Hades after the resurrection of Jesus

After Jesus rose from the dead, he made entrance into heaven or paradise possible. He released the righteous from Hades and took them to paradise. David prophesied about this in Psalms 68:18. Jesus also told the thief who was crucified with him that he would be in paradise with him that very day. After his resurrection, we see it mentioned clearly all through the New Testament that those who die having placed their faith in Jesus for salvation go to heaven after they die and not to hell or Hades. Glory to God!

"And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:43

"Therefore, it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." Ephesians 4:8

"Who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son." Colossians 1:13

"Now we are confident and are pleased rather to be absent out of the body, and to be at home with the Lord." 2 Corinthians 5:8

"I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better indeed." Philippians 1:23

Jesus took the keys of death and Hades from the devil.

One of the main things Jesus accomplished with his death and resurrection is that he overcame or conquered sin, death, and Hades and took the keys of death and Hades from the devil.

Before the resurrection of Jesus, the Bible says all human beings were subject to death all their lifetime and under the power of death, and that's why all went to Hades. In *Hosea 13:14*, God predicts the coming day when death and Sheol (Hades) would be destroyed and have no power over his holy ones. **The final destruction of Hades and death will be in the lake of fire during the final judgment**.

"Therefore, since the children have partaken of blood and of flesh, He also likewise took part in the same things, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death, that is, the devil, and might set free those who all their time to live were subject to slavery through fear of death." Hebrews 2:14-15

"*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." Revelation 1:18*

"I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from Death. Where, O Death, are your plagues? Where, O Sheol, is your sting? Compassion is hidden from My eyes." Hosea 13:14

"And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." Revelation 20:14

2. What is Hell?

The Greek term used for **hell** in the New Testament is **Gehenna**. It was actually Jesus himself who first began to use this word from his very first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount in *Matthew 5.* Jesus used hell to refer to the **torment side of Hades**, which is all that's left of Hades since the righteous go to heaven after death.

Jesus immediately, from his first teachings, began to teach his disciples that those who did not obey him and his teachings would go to hell. *Matthew 5:22* is the first place this word is used by Jesus.

"géenna (a transliteration of the Hebrew term, *Gêhinnōm*, "the valley of Hinnom") … Gehenna draws its name from the Valley of Hinnom (Hebrew ge ben-Hinnom) south-west of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament the ravine became infamous for child sacrifices to Molech (*2 Kings 23:10*; *Jeremiah 7:31–32*; 19:6). After King Josiah defiled the site, Jewish tradition remembered it as a cursed place. By Second Temple times it had become a refuse dump where fires continually smoldered, and so it served as a vivid image for eschatological judgment. When Jesus and James employ the term, their listeners already associated it with divine retribution and uncleanness." *Biblehub*

The word "hell (Gehenna)" is used 12 times in the New Testament to refer to the place of torment where souls go when they die. Jesus used the word **hell eleven times**, and the apostle James, the Lord's brother, used it **once**. You can find references to **hell** here: *Matthew 10:28, Matthew 18:9, Matthew 23:15, Matthew 23:33, Mark 9:43, Mark 9:45, Mark 9:47, Luke 12:5, and James 3:6.*

Hell is a holding place for damned souls.

After the final judgment, the Bible says that Hell shall be cast into the lake of fire together with all its occupants (*Revelation 20:14*). Hell is therefore eternal. The present hell is a holding place of torment for souls who perish without Jesus. We will look at descriptions of hell further down.

"But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be subject to the fire of hell." Matthew 5:22

"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to depart into hell." Matthew 5:29-30

"And if your hand should cause you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than having two hands to go away into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire." Mark 9:43

Hell is a place of torment for the damned (rebellious; unbelievers).

Hell is the place of torment and eternal separation from God for those who have rejected God and the salvation found in Jesus Christ. It is a real place, just as Heaven is a real place.

Hell only has power over those who are not in Christ, as we saw earlier. Jesus took the keys of death and Hades, and with this authority, he liberates the righteous from the power of hell.

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:55

Jesus spoke consistently about Hell in his teachings in the gospels. As much as it is not a pleasant subject, it is a truth that cannot be denied, ignored, or swept under the carpet. Every man must face this reality at his death if he refuses to face it here.

Hell is the clear fate of many when they die. In one of his clearest messages about hell, which I mentioned above, he referenced two actual persons who had lived and died in the days of Moses: **Lazarus** and the **rich man** (*Luke 16:19-31*). The rich man went to hell (*the torment side of Hades*), and the poor man to Abraham's bosom. It is from this story that we get some of the most vivid descriptions of hell, and that is from Jesus himself.

Hell is a place of terrible suffering and torment, and it is the definite eternal destination for billions of souls who reject God. We must therefore talk and warn men about it, just like Jesus did. Jesus said that a servant is not greater than his master. Therefore, if Jesus warned men, so must we.

3. What is the Lake of Fire?

Jesus spoke about the lake of fire and referred to it as eternal or everlasting fire. He described it as the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, but also as the place where all who reject him will go as well. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, there is no one in the lake of fire yet. The first occupants of the lake of fire will be the antichrist and the false prophet (*Revelation 19:20*). The lake of fire is the final judgment on the wicked.

After the final judgment, the Bible says that Hell shall be cast into the lake of fire together with all its occupants. The present hell is a holding place of torment for souls who perish without Jesus.

"Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the ***eternal fire*** *prepared for the devil and his angels… And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:41, 49*

John the Baptist referred to it as an unquenchable fire.

"W*hose winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and will gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:12*

All evil shall be destroyed in the lake of fire forever.

In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, Jesus revealed clear details about the final judgment and the fate of Satan, the fallen angels, the antichrist, and those who receive his mark, the false prophet, death & hell, and all sinners in the **lake of fire**. The Book of Revelation is also called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John*" *(Revelation 1:1).* Jesus himself revealed these end-time events to John in spiritual visitations.

"If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the anger of God, having been mixed undiluted in the cup of His wrath; and he will be tormented in fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up to ages of ages; and those worshiping the beast and its image have no rest day and night, and if anyone receives the mark of its name." Revelation 14:9-11

"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Revelation 19:20

"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." Revelation 20:10

"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:13-15

Souls who go to hell are tormented by demons who are not in the lake of fire yet.

Many people who have had near-death experiences, visions, or revelations of hell reveal that demons currently torment souls in hell. Satan and his demons have not been judged yet and are still working to take souls to hell. As we saw in *Hebrews 2:14-15*, the devil has power over the souls of those who die without Jesus until he himself is cast into the lake of fire after the millennium reign of Christ (*Revelation 20:10*). Only those who place their trust in Jesus are delivered from the power of death and share in the benefits Jesus accomplished on the cross.

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

Souls who die without Jesus are taken by demons to hell after death. Satan has legal rights over these souls who reject Jesus. Conversely, those who die in Jesus are taken by angels to heaven. The Bible reveals that after the final judgment, which comes after the 1,000-year reign of Christ, Satan and his demons will be thrown into the lake of fire. Death, Hell, and all sinners will also be cast into the lake of fire (read *Revelation 20*). God will finally end all evil for eternity.

4. Descriptions of hell and the lake of fire

In this section, we will look at some of the biblical descriptions of both hell and the lake of fire. Some of the descriptions are similar.

a) Hell and the lake of fire are places of torment.

Some biblical descriptions of the torments of hell (Hades, Sheol) and the lake of fire:

- Hell and the lake of fire: **Eternal** places (Matthew *25:41*, *Revelation 20:10*, *Revelation 14:11*)
- Hell is **beneath the earth** (*Numbers 16:30, Isaiah 5:14, Isaiah 14:9, Isaiah 14:15)*
- Lake of fire: A place of **wailing and gnashing of teeth** (*Matthew 13:50*).
- Hell: A place of **torment in flames and thirst**. (*Luke 16:24*)
- Lake of fire: A place of **blackest darkness** (*2 Peter 2:17*).
- Hell: A place where their worm does not die, and **fire is not quenched** (*Mark 9:45*).
- Lake of fire: A place of **fire and brimstone** (**sulfur**) (*Revelation 14:10*).
- Lake of fire: A place where the **smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night** (*Revelation 14:11*).

Some people like to joke that they will party in hell with their friends. There is no partying in hell; the torments ascend forever and ever with no rest.

b) The souls in hell and the lake of fire have bodies.

"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Luke 16:23-28

The souls in hell feel pain and human sensations, as we see with the story of the rich man in hell. In hell, the souls have spiritual bodies that can feel pain, but after the final judgment, the souls will receive resurrected physical, eternal bodies, and it is with these eternal bodies that they will be thrown into the lake of fire. The torments will definitely be worse because they will have actual eternal bodies there.

"And there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But truly the glory of the heavenly is one kind, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and

another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in decay; it is raised in immortality. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual." 1 Corinthians 15:40-44

c) Memory is retained in hell.

In hell and the lake of fire, the souls will retain their memory and remember all they did on earth and all the people who told them the truth about salvation. They will remember how they rejected Jesus. Jesus revealed this in the story of the rich man and Lazarus above. The rich man in hell could see and remember Lazarus, the poor man he despised on earth, in paradise. He could remember all his family members on earth and desired that they would be warned so as not to join him in hell; his memory was intact. In fact, memory is perfect without the limitations of the physical mortal body.

d) The souls in hell and the lake of fire feel the pain, hunger, and thirst.

The rich man in hell desired that Lazarus would dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue but was told that no one could access hell from paradise. He could feel hunger, pain, and thirst. And because the torment is constant, the souls do not sleep either.

e) Hell and the lake of fire are eternal.

The torments of the damned are eternal. The Bible says that after the last judgment, Hell and its occupants will be cast into the lake of fire. The time and place to decide one's eternal destiny and change it is here on Earth while one is still alive. In the grave, no man can repent. The Bible says, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, *but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27*

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." Revelation 14.

"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." *Matthew 25:46*

f) The damned souls in hell and the lake of fire will be allowed to see into heaven.

From the passage of the rich man and Lazarus, it appears that lost souls can see into the abode of the righteous but cannot access it. Though this is inferred from the text, it seems highly probable.

The following passage in Isaiah also seems to imply that the redeemed shall be able to look upon the damned.

"And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." Isaiah 66:24

5. Why was the lake of fire created?

The lake of fire was created for the devil and his angels, and not for man. Jesus mentions this in *Matthew 25:41*: "*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* But unfortunately, there are human beings who will join the devil there. Jesus refers to these people as cursed. These are the people who reject Jesus and his salvation and choose to follow Satan and serve sin.

Satan was a created angel meant to worship and serve God, but he left his estate and rebelled against God. He tried to usurp God's authority and exalt himself as God. *"For you have said in your heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north." Isaiah 14:13*

Satan was cast out of heaven as a result of his rebellion. This is mentioned by the prophet Isaiah in *Isaiah 14:12* and by the apostle John in *Revelation 12:9:*

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." *Revelation 12:9*

"*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations*!" *Isaiah 14:12*

a) The fall of man

Satan deceived Eve out of his deep hatred for God and man. His goal was to remove mankind from God's presence forever and get them to worship him and share his fate of eternal damnation. Eve gave Adam the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil to eat after she had eaten it. This is the tree that God expressly forbade them to eat from (*read Genesis 3*). Satan deceived Eve into believing that they would become like God if they did this. God, of course, had told them they would surely die if they ate from this tree, and they did. Sin entered them, and they fell from their original sinless nature and union with God and died spiritually and physically. Rebellion set in because the nature of Satan corrupted them. Rebellion is the fruit of the devil.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve because he wanted them to share in his eternal fate of separation from God. Satan knows how glorious heaven is, and he does not want anyone else to get there since he lost his place in it. He knew that God hates sin, and he knew that sin separates one from God, and so he, through deception, tempted Eve. He used the temptation and deception of *"being like God."* This is one of the chief tricks of Satan: **deception**. His chief work is to convince men that they can be like God. It is the same lie he uses now in **the New Age spirituality movement, atheism, witchcraft**, and the spirit of rebellion rampant in the world.

The chief tricks of Satan are **rebellion**, **deception**, and **ignorance**.

b) The way to eternal life

God has made a way for mankind to be freed from the bondage of sin once and for all. This was by sending his only begotten sinless Son, Jesus, himself God, to take on human form, come to earth, die as a sin offering for our sins in the hands of men and the powers of darkness (his own creation), rise from the dead, take the keys of death and Hades from the devil, and purchase (pay the price) eternal life for all who believe in him.

Jesus, as a sinless offering for sins, satisfied divine justice, becoming the only acceptable offering for sin. "*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)*. "*And he is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2)*. Those who believe in him and his sacrifice on their behalf become born again. They become sons of God, a new creation. And they consequently pass from death to life.

John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

God loves us and made a way for our redemption. If we reject this way, there is no other way for us to be with God, and when we die, our fate is eternal separation from God. *Acts 4:12* says, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*."

c) God does not send people to hell.

Many people accuse God of being evil and sending people to hell. But when we understand the plan of salvation, we realize clearly that it is not God who sends people to hell. He did not create hell for people, but for the devil and the fallen angels (the first rebels). He made a way for us not to go to hell by freely giving his only begotten son for us to atone for our sins. "*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:17*

Apostle Paul asks, *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" Hebrews 2:3*

d) Why does man go to hell?

All those who rebel against God and reject Jesus cannot be with God for eternity. Hell is willful separation from God. Man condemns himself to hell by rejecting God. God gives everyone above the age of accountability a chance to believe in Jesus Christ. No one goes to hell who has

not rejected God and rejected Jesus. Everyone is given a fair chance. *"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*" *Hebrews 3:15*

"*Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation*." *2 Peter 3:15*

"*The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance*." *2 Peter 3:9*

e) The only way to escape hell is God's way.

We cannot decide to know God how we please, nor create God in our image. We also cannot manufacture our own way to get to heaven, but must go through the way God himself has provided. And that is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. People go to hell for rejecting God. God cannot force people into heaven, nor can he accept sinners into heaven since he is holy, and his kingdom is holy. This entire mess began because of sin. He gives us this life to choose to be with him or not. Therefore, he has given us free will because he loves us. He wants us to love him freely because he wants children and not robots. Everyone will be held accountable for their free will choice.

Romans 1:19-21 says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are* ***without excuse***, *because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkene*d."

6. Who goes to hell?

Jesus and the apostles reveal who goes to hell in various teachings of the New Testament:

a) The unbelieving and rebellious—those who reject his sacrifice for their sins.

Those who reject Jesus and his salvation have chosen Satan as their father and master, for he is the chief rebel against God. Those who reject God and choose sin make their choice for Satan and end up in hell with the devil for eternity. This includes those who try to come up with their own ways to get to heaven apart from Jesus Christ.

*"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned **already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18*

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

b) The disobedient Christians: backsliders, hypocritical

Those who once accepted Jesus but did not truly follow him. They live in willful sin and disobedience. Jesus called these "*hypocrites*." They claim to follow Jesus, but deep down, they do not; they only use the name of Jesus for their profit. It is not enough to claim to know Jesus; we must prove it with our lives. To love Jesus is to obey him and leave our sins behind. We must show by our works and lives that we love Jesus. The Bible says to pursue *"holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14)*.

"If you love me, keep my commands." John 14:15

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26-27

If we willfully continue in our sins and practice lawlessness, then we are no longer his.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your

name?' And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" Matthew 7:21-23.

c) The lukewarm Christians

Jesus said that he would vomit the lukewarm Christians out of his mouth (*Revelation 3:16*). "Lukewarm" means neither hot nor cold, implying being double-minded, cowardly, and ashamed of Jesus and his words.

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." Revelation 3:16

And in the parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins (*Matthew 25:1-13*), we see that the foolish virgins who had no oil in their lamps were shut out of the marriage. Oil represents the Holy Spirit. These virgins were not led by the Holy Spirit, meaning they were in darkness, lukewarm, and not living the life of a Christian. Their light had gone out.

"Afterward, the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." Matthew 25:11-13

d) Unprofitable/unfaithful servants

Jesus mentioned in the parable of the talents in *Matthew 25* that unprofitable servants who did not bear any fruit but buried what God had given them would be thrown into outer darkness. Bearing fruit is not just in works of service but also bearing fruit worthy of the born-again life, the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23)*. This echoes *John 15,* where Jesus says that any branch that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:6

"For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:29-30

e) The unforgiving and unmerciful Christians

Jesus also talked about the unforgiving in the parable of the unforgiving servant, who refused to forgive his fellow servant despite having been forgiven of more sins (*Matthew 18:21-35*). He said this servant would be thrown into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So my heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." Matthew 18:32-35

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." Matthew 5:7

7. Who will go to the lake of fire?

Below is a list of those who will spend eternity in the lake of fire based on the word of God:

a) The beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet

The antichrist and the false prophet will appear on the world scene at the very end of days, as described in *Revelation 13*. They will deceive the world to receive the mark of the beast and worship the image of the beast during the final half of the tribulation period.

These will be the first ones to be thrown into the lake of fire. They will be thrown alive into the lake of fire by Jesus at his 2nd coming before his 1,000-year reign on earth (*Revelation 19:20*).

"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Revelation 19:20

b) Satan and his angels

Satan will be cast into the lake of fire next after the 1,000-year reign of Christ. He and his vast army will make one final attempt to overthrow Jesus and his camp, and God will send fire from heaven to devour them. Satan, who has deceived human beings for thousands of years since Adam, will be thrown into the lake of fire forever (*Revelation 20:10).*

"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." Revelation 20:10

Jesus also mentioned that the devil's angels who rebelled with him would also be cast into the lake of fire.

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41

c) Death

Death will be cast into the lake of fire after it has delivered all the dead that are IN it to stand before God in the final great white throne judgment after the millennial reign of Christ (*Revelation 20*).

*"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and **Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.** And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then **Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.** This is the second death." Revelation 20:13-14*

Death is not an event; it is an actual entity or power that devours. What kind I don't know, but the Bible tells us that there are **angelic principalities, powers, rulers,** and **authorities** that rule over the earth (including the underworld) and the second heavens *(Colossians 1:16*). In the book of *Revelation,* we read of Death and Hades riding horses, implying that they are some types of angels. Habakkuk 2:5 says that death and Sheol have an appetite and are never satisfied

"Wealth indeed betrays him. He is an arrogant man never at rest. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and like Death, he is never satisfied. He gathers all the nations to himself and collects all the peoples as his own." Habakkuk 2:5

"Then I looked and saw a pale green horse. Its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed close behind. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill by sword, by famine, by plague, and by the beasts of the earth." Revelation 6:8

Death swallows up the souls of men who don't belong to God. Those who belong to Jesus die physically, but their souls are taken by God, and death cannot hold them. (*"Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:55*). The Bible also tells us that the last enemy to be destroyed will be death. Death will also die the second death.

"*The last enemy to be destroyed is death." 1 Corinthians 15:26*

d) Hades/hell

Hades will also be cast into the lake of fire after it has delivered all the dead that are IN it to stand before God in the final great white throne judgment after the millennial reign of Christ (*Revelation 20*).

*"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and **Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.** And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then **Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.** This is the second death." Revelation 20:13-14*

Hades is also a real living entity or power. The Bible describes it as having a throat and having living qualities, like never being satisfied and rising in excitement to meet souls. We also saw above in *Revelation 6:8,* Hades riding a horse, and in *Habakkuk 2:5*, Sheol having an appetite that is not being satisfied.

"Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." Proverbs 27:20

This Abaddon mentioned in the verse above with Sheol, also known as **destruction,** is referred to in *Revelation 19* as the angel of the abyss. Therefore, if destruction is an angel, it is not a stretch to think that Sheol (Hades) may also be an angel of some sort.

*"They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss. His name in **Hebrew is Abaddon**, and in the **Greek, he has the name Apollyon**." Revelation 9:11*

"Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations." Isaiah 14:9

*"Therefore, Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure; and Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry, and the jubilant within her, descend into it." Isaiah 5:1*4

e) Human unbelievers/sinners/rebels

This is all human beings who have ever lived but rejected the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for their sins and chose to be separated from God.

This category of people is referred to in the Bible as sinners, children of wrath, sons of disobedience, or unbelievers. Because they rejected the only way provided by God to be reconciled to him as a Father, their names were not written in the Book of Life, and they too will sadly spend eternity in the lake of fire with Satan, fallen angels, and his agents *(Revelation 20:11-15).*

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things that were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:11-15

Revelation 21 and 22 give a more detailed description of these unrepentant sinners who will end up in the Lake of Fire:

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

"Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the sexually immoral, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone loving and practicing falsehood." Revelation 22:15

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41

Satan knows his time is short.

Satan's fate is sealed, and he knows it. The Bible already tells us his end. He will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity. But human beings still have hope as long as they are alive. Jesus died for humans and not angels. *"And the devil that **deceived them** was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Revelation 20:10*

Satan knows his end, and he knows his time is short. His goal is to deceive as many as possible to end up in the lake of fire with him, for he hates God and hates mankind. Apostle John tells us, "*Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.*" *Revelation 12:12*

The Bible says in *Isaiah 5:14, KJV,* that *"hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure."* This analogy of hell enlarging itself reveals that many are sadly ending up in hell. Many who have been taken to hell by the mercy of God in near-death experiences and visions mention seeing souls entering hell daily in large numbers. Hell is enlarging by the second as souls descend into its belly who have rejected God. Please do not go there! God has made a way!

God has made a way.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are all naturally born sinners because we are the seed of Adam and Eve. Our nature is predisposed to sin. We, as the human race, rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden. We all can attest to this, as we have been sinning since we were born by default. Mankind made this choice to rebel, not God. We chose to listen to Satan and separated ourselves from God. As a result, we doomed ourselves to eternal hell forever.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." Ephesians 2:3-5.

God, by his mercy, made a way to redeem us. The first Adam sinned, and all sinned with him as his blood descendants, receiving death and condemnation. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, died for sins once, bearing our punishment, shedding his blood as a ransom for all so that those who receive him might have eternal life through his life. Through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross as the sinless lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we can be saved.

"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." Romans 5:18-19

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21

When we accept Jesus's sacrifice on our behalf and accept him as our mediator between God and us, we are born again into the Kingdom of God. We pass from death to life and are united with God our Father again.

Choose God, Jesus Christ, the new heavens and new earth, and the New Jerusalem.

God has prepared a glorious eternity for those who choose him. The glorious, eternal celestial Kingdom of God is prepared for us who love him. The last two chapters of the Bible, *Revelation 21 and 22,* conclude this age by describing the glories of **New Jerusalem**, the city God has prepared for the saints. The Bible also says there will be a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells, and God shall make all things new. Will you be there? To love God is to love his son, Jesus Christ, who died for us, and choose to obey the Father.

"**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,** having been prepared as a bride having been adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain; they will be no more, because the former things have passed away." And the One sitting on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He says, "Write this, because these words are faithful and true." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the one thirsting I will give of the spring of the water of life freely. The one overcoming will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son." Revelation 21:1-7

"But according to His promise, we are awaiting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." 2 Peter 3:13

Jesus has prepared a place for those who love him.

Before Jesus was crucified, he said, *"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me." In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going*" (John 14:1-4). What a great comfort to know Jesus has prepared a place for us and wants us to be with him so dearly that he gave his life for us.

God is love and sent his own Son to die for us. What greater love is there than this? Jesus laid his life down for us so that we may partake of heaven and eternity with him. Praise God!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

Hell and the lake of fire are real.

As we have seen in this article, despite what many falsely teach, hell and the lake of fire are literal places and not a state of consciousness. They are also eternal, and there is no annihilation taught about them in the scripture. The Bible used the words "eternal" and "forever," and God does not lie.

Hell and the lake of fire are real places of eternal torment, filled with the fiery fire of God's judgment. The Bible talks about the fire of God's jealousy and fury in several places.

"Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? ***His fury is poured out like fire,*** *and the rocks are thrown down by Him." Nahum 1:6*

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the ***fire of His jealousy****, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land." Zephaniah 1:18*

The Bible says that God is a **consuming fire** *(Hebrews 12:29)*. Yes, God is love, but he is also holy and a God of divine justice whose justice must stand. God cannot let sin go unpunished. Sin is an affront to His holy nature. That is why Jesus had to die for our salvation from sin and why he boldly claimed himself to be **the way, the truth, and the life**, and **the only way to the Father** *(John 14:6).*

Eternity is real. Heaven is real, and hell is real. We get to choose our destiny while we live. Right now, while you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Do not let your pride and ego get in the way. None of us will be here forever. And none of us can save our own souls. Receive him when he calls you. Jesus said, *"And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*." *Matthew 10:28*

Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Receive Jesus Christ today.

- **A**cknowledge that he died for you on the cross, becoming a sin offering for you. Acknowledge that you have sinned against a holy God and cannot save yourself, please God, or get to heaven by your own efforts or merits. Accept his sacrifice for your sins. Repent, and ask him to forgive you of all your sins.
- **B**elieve that by faith you are born again because of what Jesus did for you.
- **C**onfess him boldly as your Lord and Savior.

Go before him in prayer and cry out to him for forgiveness and salvation. He will not reject you. It is a decision of the heart, mind, and soul. We give him our lives to receive his eternal life. When we receive him, our names are written in the Book of Life in Heaven (*Revelation 20:12*). Heaven becomes our eternal home, and we are united with our Father forever.

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with your heart you believe and are justified, and with your mouth you confess and are saved." Romans 10:9-10

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one coming to Me, I shall not cast out." John 6:37

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12

About the Author

Mwendwa Mbaabu is a disciple and servant of Jesus Christ, a teacher, and an author. She is the founder of Awaken the Bride of Christ Ministry and Hand of Hope Outreach.

Through her writings, Bible-based teachings, and outreach work, Mwendwa proclaims the saving gospel of Jesus Christ and helps people grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and find freedom from bondage and deception.

Formerly a backslider turned new-age author, coach, and teacher, Jesus Christ radically delivered and saved her at the age of 41 from a life of demonic bondage, deception, and eternal misery.

Jesus has delivered her from a deeply broken and sinful past littered with severe childhood trauma, years of clinical depression and suicidal ideations, alcoholism, LGBTQ and sexual bondage, spiritual abuse, church hurt, backsliding, self-destructive habits, demonization, and years of New Age spiritual deception, and given her new life in him.

Her mission is to use her past experiences and the complete freedom she has found in Christ to help others find freedom too. If he could do it for her, he can do it for anyone.

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